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Message Text

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41
ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W
---------- 113094
R 131555Z NOV 73
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9044

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 6112

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PN, PFOR
SUBJ: CONVERSATION BETWEEN SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
AND FOREIGN MINISTER TACK

REF: PANAMA 6083

SUMMARY: SECRETARY OF ARMY CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER NOVEMBER 12 AND HAD VERY CORDIAL 30 MINUTE CONVERSATION. TACK SAID THAT HE WAS VERY ENCOURAGED ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF REACHING AGREEMENT AS RESULT OF HIS MEETING WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER AND AMBASSADOR BUNKER IN NEW YORK. SECRETARY STRESSED NEED FOR BOTH SIDES TO CONSIDER OTHER'S REQUIREMENTS AND MAINTAIN POSITIVE ATTITUDE. END SUMMARY.

1. TACK SAID MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FOR PANAMA WAS HISTORY AND

NATIONAL PRIDE. HE HAD BEEN BRIEFED ON CALLAWAY-LOPEZ GUEVARA CONVERSATION (REFTEL) AND BELIEVED HE UNDERSTOOD ISSUES OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE TO U S (FOREIGN MINISTER DID NOT DISCUSS ANY ISSUE SPECIFICALLY, OBVIOUSLY PREFERRING TO KEEP CONVERSATION GENERAL AND LEAVE SPECIFIC POINTS TO GENERAL TORRIJOS.) FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT U S AND PANAMA HAD MANY MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST ON WHICH WE WERE TOGETHER. HE CONSIDERED RELATIONS EXCELLENT. THE ONLY ISSUE DIVIDING US IS THE CANAL, HE SAID.

2. SECRETARY CALLAWAY COMMENDED FOREIGNMINISTER FOR POSITIVE
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ATTITUDE OF GOP IN RECENT MONTHS. HE THOUGHT CONGRESS WOULD RESPOND TO POSITIVE APPROACH WHEREAS IT REACTED NEGATIVELY TO PRESSURE.
HE SHARED FOREIGN MINISTER'S VIEWS ON AMBASSADOR BUNKER'S

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CAPABILITIES AND CAPACITY, AFTER LISTENING AND WEIGHING VARYING VIEWPOINTS, TO FIND ACCEPTABLE COMPROMISE. HE NOTED CONSIDERABLE PRIDE ON U S SIDE BECAUSE OF ITS ACCOMPLISHMENT IN CONSTRUCTING CANAL WHERE OTHERS HAD FAILED. IT WAS "MOONSHOT" AT TURN OF CENTURY AND SOLUTION HAD TO GIVE DUE CONSIDERATION TO THIS STRONG FEELING OF U S.

3.FOREIGN MINISTER SAID CANAL ISSUE IS ON AGENDA OF FOREIGN MINISTER'S MEETING.HE SAID MEXICAN FOREIGN MINISTER ADDED IT AND HE RECALLED REBASA HAD TOLD SECRETARY IN NEW YORK THAT CANAL WOULD BE ONE OF ITEMS. I AGAIN EXPRESSED HOPE THAT ISSUE WOULD BE HANDLED CONSTRUCTIVELY AND ANY EFFORT TO PRESSURE U S G PUBLICLY WOULD BE AVOIDED. OTHERWISE IT WOULD HAVE VERY NEGATIVE EFFECT ON NEGOTIATIONS. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT AND ISSUE WOULD BE ADDRESSED IN "NON-CONFLICTIVE" MANNER AND ONLY FOR PURPOSE OF RECORDING THAT CANAL ISSUE IS A MATTER OF CONCERN TO LATIN AMERICA.

4. FOREIGN MINISTER CLOSED THE INTERVIEW BY STATING HE WAS OPTIMISTIC AND EXPRESSING HOPE THAT EVENTS OVER COMING MONTHS WOULD NOT GIVE HIM CAUSE TO BE PESSIMISTIC.
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